



March 28, 2016

Dear Colleague:

The week before Memorial Day, May 23–29, 2016, marks the twelfth annual **Healthy and Safe Swimming Week**. This is a great time to engage and collaborate with public pool operators, beach managers, the media, residential pool owners, and the public to maximize the health benefits of water-based physical activity while minimizing the risk of recreational water–associated illness and injury in your community.

The theme of this year’s Healthy and Safe Swimming Week is “Check out Healthy and Safe Swimming.” Bathers and parents of young bathers can help protect their health and that of their families and friends by checking the latest inspection results for public pools, water playgrounds, hot tubs/spas, and other venues they swim in treated water, and by doing their own simple and short inspection before getting in the water.

Additionally, as many of you know, the second edition of the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC; www.cdc.gov/mahc) will be released this summer swim season. Thank you to all of our state and local public health colleagues who joined the Council for the Model Aquatic Health Code (CMAHC; www.cmahc.org) and took the time to review the first edition, propose revisions to promote public health, and vote on almost 160 change requests. If you are not yet a CMAHC member, become a member today (www.cmahc.org/membership.php) and help ensure that Public Health’s voice is heard!

Finally, summer is a popular time for swimming in venues such as lakes and oceans, where harmful algal blooms (HABs) can occur. Over the past few years, in a collaboration with state and federal partners, CDC has been spearheading development of resources to track and prevent HAB-related illness, including a new web-based case reporting database and an informational website, both of which are set to launch this summer.

To encourage and support your Healthy and Safe Swimming Week efforts, we have provided this health promotion toolkit, which includes community outreach suggestions; a web-based resource list; and a sample press release, op-ed piece, and proclamation. We hope you will find these resources useful as you engage your community in Healthy and Safe Swimming Week.

For additional information about Healthy and Safe Swimming Week, visit:
www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html.

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National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)**

**Healthy and Safe Swimming Week
May 23–29, 2016**

Outreach Suggestions for Community Partners and the Public

All Audiences

- Update (or create) Healthy and Safe Swimming Week webpage on your agency’s website.
 - Copy content from CDC’s Healthy Swimming website and safe swimming webpages while maintaining the look and feel of your website (i.e., content syndication).
Visit <http://tools.cdc.gov/syndication> or contact healthywater@cdc.gov for more information.
 - Include links to CDC’s Healthy Swimming and Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) websites and safe swimming pages, EPA’s Beaches and CyanoHABs websites, and CPSC’s Pool Safely website (see “Web-based Resource List” in toolkit).

Media

- Provide press release to media outlets (see “Sample Press Release” in toolkit).
 - Share information on
 - The latest public health data on illness and injury associated with recreational water
 - Steps we can all take to prevent recreational water–associated illness and injury
- Have media shadow environmental health practitioner on an inspection of a public aquatic venue.
- Hold press conference during Healthy and Safe Swimming Week.
- Write op-ed article on healthy swimming (see “Sample Op-Ed Piece” in toolkit) for your state/local newspaper.

Swimmers and Parents

- Disseminate healthy and safe swimming promotion materials at pools, beaches, childcare centers, etc.
 - Download and share CDC materials: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/index.html.
- Disseminate healthy and safe swimming messages through newsletters, social media, etc. that are distributed by schools, camps, fairs, etc.

Aquatic-Facility Operators and Beach Managers

- Include information on healthy and safe swimming in pool operator and beach manager training.
- Collaborate with pool operators and beach managers to promote Healthy and Safe Swimming Week.
 - Provide healthy and safe swimming promotion materials.
- Promote learn-to-swim and CPR training opportunities as community drowning prevention strategies.
 - Check out the World’s Largest Swim Lesson: www.worldslargestswimminglesson.org/.

Healthcare Providers

- Provide healthy and safe swimming materials.
- Engage your local chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (www.aap.org) or other organization for healthcare professionals.

Community Leaders

- Create fact sheets for community leaders (e.g., program administrators, boards of health, and elected officials) detailing specifics about your agency’s Healthy and Safe Swimming Week efforts.
- Collaborate on a Healthy and Safe Swimming Week proclamation (see “Sample Proclamation” in toolkit).

Let us know about your activities related to Healthy and Safe Swimming Week!

Email us at healthywater@cdc.gov.

Health and Safe Swimming Week 2016
Links to CDC Healthy and Safe Swimming Information and Resources

General Information	
Healthy Swimming Website	www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming
Healthy and Safe Swimming Week	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/observances/hss-week/index.html
Safe Swimming Links	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/injury/index.html
CPSC's Pool Safely Website	www.poolsafely.gov
Prevention Resources	
Swimmer Protection Links	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/index.html
Healthy Swimming Materials	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources
Healthy Swimming Brochure	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/resources/brochures.html Printed English and Spanish brochures available for FREE!
Swim Diapers/Swim Pants	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/swim-diapers-swim-pants.html
Breastfeeding in Pools and Hot Tubs/Spas	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/protection/breastfeeding-in-pools.html
Resources for Public Health Professionals	
Healthy Swimming Data & Statistics	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/data
MMWR Outbreak Summary Reports	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/surveillance/rec-water-surveillance-reports.html
Online Environmental Public Health Course	www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/eLearn/EPHOC.htm (See Swimming Pools and Recreational Facilities)
Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) NEW	www.cdc.gov/mahc 2nd edition of MAHC available summer swim season 2016!
Conference for the MAHC (CMAHC) NEW	www.cmahc.org Become a CMAHC member today to be eligible to propose and vote on changes to the MAHC and help ensure that public health's voice is heard!
Resources for Aquatic-Facility Operators	
Fecal Incident Response Recommendations	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/swimming/pools/fecal-incident-response-recommendations.pdf
Pool Chemical Safety	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/preventing-pool-chemical-injuries.html Printed poster on safe storage and poster on safe handling available for FREE!
Animals and Pools	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/animals
Open Water Resources	
General Info: Oceans, Lakes, Rivers	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/oceans
EPA's Beaches Website	www.epa.gov/beaches
Harmful Algal Blooms Website	www.cdc.gov/hab Available summer swim season 2016!
EPA's CyanoHABs Website	www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanohabs
Healthy Swimming Links by Additional Audiences	
Healthcare Professionals	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/audience-medicalprofessionals.html
En Español	www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/audience-espanol.html

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2016

Sample Press Release

For Release [date]

Contact: Name, title
Phone/e-mail

**Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2016
Check out Healthy and Safe Swimming!**

<City, State> — The week before Memorial Day (May 23–29, 2016) is Healthy and Safe Swimming Week. The goal of this Week is to maximize the health benefits of swimming by promoting healthy and safe swimming. Just 2.5 hours of water-based (or other forms of) physical activity per week has health benefits for everyone. Each of us plays a role in preventing illnesses and injuries linked to the water we share and swim in, this summer and year-round.

Why Is This Important?	A Few Simple and Effective Prevention Steps We Can All Take
<p>Inspections of public pools, hot tubs/spas, water playgrounds, or other places with treated water:</p> <p>To protect swimmers’ health and safety, state and local standards specify how to run public pools, hot tubs/spas, water playgrounds, and other places with treated water. Some state and local health departments have staff inspect these places, much like they inspect restaurants, to make sure the standards are met and the risk for illness and injury is minimized. Inspections should be posted onsite, much like they are in restaurants, and online.</p> <p>However, inspections of public places where we swim in treated water are typically done only one to three times per year. To help protect your and your loved ones’ health and safety year-round, CDC recommends that swimmers and parents of young swimmers do their own quick inspection before getting into the water.</p>	<p>Before getting into a public pool, hot tub/spa, water playground, or other place with treated water, do your own inspection. Check the following items if they pass your inspection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Water’s pH and free chlorine or bromine concentration are correct*. <input type="checkbox"/> Drain at the bottom of the deep end is visible. <input type="checkbox"/> Drain covers at the bottom appear to be secured and in good repair. <input type="checkbox"/> Lifeguard is on duty. If not, safety equipment, such as a rescue ring or pole, is available. <p>If any of the above items are NOT checked off, do NOT get into the water. Tell the person in charge about the unchecked item(s), so the problem(s) can be fixed.</p> <p>*Use test strips to test pH and free chlorine or bromine concentration. Most superstores, hardware stores, and pool-supply stores sell pool test strips. Follow the manufacturer’s directions. CDC recommends pH 7.2–7.8 and free available chlorine concentration of at least 3 ppm in hot tubs/spas and at least 1 ppm in pools and water playgrounds OR free available bromine concentration of at least 4 ppm in hot tubs/spas and at least 3 ppm in pools and water playgrounds.</p>
<p>Illnesses caused by the germs in the places we swim:</p> <p>In 2011–2012, 90 outbreaks were linked to swimming. Chlorine and other disinfectants kill most germs within minutes, but some can survive for days. Pee, poop, sweat, and dirt from swimmers’ bodies mix with chlorine and form chemicals that can make our eyes red and even aggravate asthma. This mixing can also use up the chlorine, which would otherwise kill germs. So it’s important to keep germs, pee, poop, sweat, and dirt out of the water we</p>	<p>Every swimmer should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea. • Shower before you get in the water. • Don’t pee or poop in the water. • Don’t swallow the water. <p>Every hour—everyone out!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take kids on bathroom breaks. • Check diapers, and change them in a bathroom or diaper changing area—not poolside—to keep germs away from the pool.

<p>share and swim in, this summer and year-round.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming</p>	
<p>Drowning: Every day, two children younger than 14 years of age die from drowning. Drowning is a leading cause of injury death for children ages 1 to 4 years of age.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html</p>	<p>Keep swimmers safe in the water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everyone knows how to swim. • Use life jackets appropriately. • Provide continuous, attentive supervision close to swimmers. • Know CPR. <p>Prevent access to water when pool is not in use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install and maintain barriers like 4-sided fencing and weight-bearing pool covers. • Use locks/alarms for windows and doors.
<p>Injuries caused by mishandling pool chemicals (for pool operators and residential pool owners): Pool chemicals are added to maintain water quality (for example, kill germs) and stop corrosion and scaling of equipment. Each year, however, mishandling of pool chemicals by operators of public pools and residential pool owners leads to 3,000–5,000 visits to emergency departments across the United States.</p> <p>For more info, visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/preventing-pool-chemical-injuries.html</p>	<p>Pool operators and residential pool owners should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and follow directions on product labels. • Wear appropriate safety equipment (for example, goggles), as directed on product labels, when handling pool chemicals. • Secure pool chemicals to protect people (especially young children) and animals. • Add pool chemicals poolside ONLY when directed by product label and when no one is in the water. <p>Prevent violent, potentially explosive, reactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEVER mix different pool chemicals with each other, especially chlorine products with acid. • Pre-dissolve pool chemicals ONLY when directed by product label. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add pool chemical to water, NEVER water to pool chemical.
<p>Harmful Algae: Algae can grow in warm, nutrient-rich fresh and marine waters. When there is an abundant growth of algae that harms people, animals, or the local ecology, it is referred to as a harmful algal bloom (HAB). HABs in fresh and marine waters can produce toxins that have caused a variety of illnesses including skin irritation, coughing, sneezing, diarrhea, abdominal pain, numbness, and dizziness. Symptoms can vary depending on the type of HAB toxin and the type of exposure such as skin contact, ingestion by eating food or drinking water contaminated with HAB toxins, or breathing in tiny droplets or mist contaminated with HAB toxins.</p>	<p>Avoid water that contains harmful algae—when in doubt, stay out!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for waterbody or beach advisories announced by local public health authorities or beach managers. If the beach is closed, stay out. • Don't swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water's surface. • Avoid entering or swimming in bodies of water that contain or are near dead fish or other dead animals. • Keep children or pets from playing in or drinking scummy water. • If you do swim in water that might contain harmful algae, get out and rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible afterward. • If pets, especially dogs, swim in scummy water, rinse them off immediately. Do not let them lick the algae off of their fur.

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2016
Sample Op-Ed

It's Not the Chlorine in the Pool that's Making Your Eyes Red...

Dear Editor,

Have your eyes ever started to sting and turn red when you were swimming in a pool? Did you think it was because of the chlorine in the water? Have you ever walked into an indoor pool area, gotten a whiff of a strong chemical smell, and thought, "Wow, there's a lot of chlorine in the pool?"

It's actually not the chlorine. You're smelling a chemical compound created when chlorine reacts with pee, poop, sweat or dirt from swimmers. These chloramines irritate the eyes and respiratory tract, can aggravate asthma, and cause a strong chemical smell at indoor pools. These chloramines are different from the type of chloramine which is sometimes used to treat our drinking water.

Healthy swimming depends, in part, on what we swimmers keep out of the treated water we swim in this summer and year-round. We all share the water we swim in, and we each need to do our part to keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy. Don't forget, in addition to being an all-American way to have fun with family and friends, swimming can be a way to keep physically active. Just 2.5 hours of water-based (or other forms of) physical activity per week has health benefits for everyone. The health benefits for children are wide-reaching. Studies have shown that children with asthma might have fewer symptoms when swimming regularly compared with other asthmatic children and that children in general benefit socially from contact with other children at recreational water venues (for example, pools and lakes). For pregnant women, water-based physical activity can help regulate body temperature, minimize stress on joints during exercise, and prevent or control diabetes brought on by pregnancy. Water-based physical activity also improves women's bone health after menopause and improves older adults' ability to carry out everyday activities.

Popular Olympic swimmers have publicly admitted to peeing in the pool. They've laughed about it, and comedians have joked about it. But really, where else is it acceptable to pee in public? Mixing chlorine and pee not only creates certain types of chloramines—it also uses up the chlorine in the pool, which would otherwise kill germs. These germs can get into the water when they wash off swimmers' bodies or when infected swimmers have diarrheal incidents in the water. Just one diarrheal incident can release enough germs into the water that swallowing a mouthful can cause diarrhea lasting 2–3 weeks.

Even when the concentration of chlorine or bromine and the pH (which can maximize chlorine's and bromine's germ-killing power) are well maintained, germs aren't instantly killed. *Cryptosporidium* (or Crypto), the leading cause of disease outbreaks linked to pools, can survive in an adequately chlorinated pool for 7–10 days. In 2011–2012 (the last years for which national data are available), almost 70 outbreaks linked to pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas were detected in the United States. Over half of these outbreaks were caused by Crypto. **<NOTE: Consider substituting national statistics**

with state/local statistics to increase state/local interest.> These statistics remind us that the water we share and swim in is not germ free and this is why it's important for each of us to do our part to keep germs, pee, poop, sweat, and dirt out of the water in the first place.

To help prevent chloramines from forming and to protect your health and the health of your family and friends, here are a few simple and effective steps all of us can take each time we swim:

- Stay out of the water if you have diarrhea.
- Shower before you get in the water.
- Don't pee or poop in the water.
- Don't swallow the water.

Every hour—everyone out!

- Take kids on bathroom breaks.
- Check diapers, and change them in a bathroom or diaper changing area—not poolside—to keep germs away from the pool.

These steps will help you minimize risk of illness while maximizing the health benefits and swimming enjoyment. Healthy swimming is not just about the steps the pool operators and pool inspectors take—so let's all do our part to help keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy this summer and year round.

Remember...Think Healthy. Swim Healthy. Be Healthy!

Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2016

Sample Proclamation

Adapted from proclamation developed by

Environmental Management Department of Sacramento County, California

RESOLUTION OF <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>

PROCLAIMING MAY 23–29, 2016 AS

“HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING WEEK”

IN <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION>

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON> considers the health and safety of its residents and visitors its highest priority; and

WHEREAS, during the week of May 23–29, 2016, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY>, together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will be conducting educational outreach to prevent illness and injury linked to the water we share and swim in and thus maximize health benefits for all; and

WHEREAS, the week of May 23–29, 2016 has been set aside to raise public awareness of the importance of healthy and safe swimming and to reinforce education among those who operate and maintain swimming pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas; and

WHEREAS, on behalf of the residents and visitors of <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION>, we are pleased to join local, state, and federal agencies, in ensuring healthy and safe swimming in <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION>; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the ongoing efforts made by the dedicated men and women who are trained to ensure health and safety standards are met at public swimming pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas in this <State/County/City>, in part, by conducting over <INSERT COUNT> inspections of public swimming pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs/spas each year; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY> also provides information on how to actively protect health and safety of all; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Healthy and Safe Swimming Week 2016 is *Check out Healthy and Safe Swimming*, because as swimmers, parents, aquatics staff, residential pool owners, and public health officials, we each play a role in preventing illnesses and injury in the places we swim; and

WHEREAS, the <INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY> provides <INSERT LIST OF PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY’S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING, INCLUDING ANY TRAINING WORKSHOPS FOR POOL OPERATORS AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES>; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the <INSERT NAME OF AUTHORIZING ORGANIZATION/PERSON>, does hereby proclaim the week of May 23–29, 2016 as **“HEALTHY AND SAFE SWIMMING WEEK”** in <INSERT NAME OF JURISDICTION> to focus attention on the importance of preventing illness and injury linked to the water which we share and swim in for the protection of our residents and visitors now and throughout the year.

<ADD JURISDICTION-SPECIFIC AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES, SEALS, ETC.>